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CONSUMER TIME

THANKSGIVING, PAST AND PRESENT

NETWORK: NBC

DATE: November 23, 1946

ORIGIN: WRC

TIME: 12:15--12:30 PM EST

(Produced by the United States Department of Agriculture
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CONSUMER TIME is restricted to network broadcast of the
program...presented for more than thirteen years in the
interest of consumers.)

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1. SOUND: CASH REGISTER RINGS TWICE...MONEY IN THE TILL

2. JOHN: It's CONSUMER TIME!

3. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER

4. ANNCR: During the next fifteen minutes, the National Broadcasting Company
and its affiliated independent stations make their facilities
available for the presentation of CONSUMER TIME by the U. S.
Department of Agriculture. And here are your inquiring
consumers...Johnny and Mrs. Freyman

5. FREYMAN: Next Thursday, Johnny, we're going to celebrate our three hundred
and twenty-fifth Thanksgiving Day.

6. JOHN: is it really that long
Mrs. Freyman/since the Pilgrims had their first Thanksgiving
feast?

7. FREYMAN: Mmmmm hmm...the history books tell us that right after their first
harvest in November, 1621, the Pilgrims held a feast that lasted
for three whole days

8. JOHN. Three days...wow...that would never do for me...not the way I eat
on Thanksgiving Day.

9. FREYMAN: Don't we all!

10. JOHN: Ah! but this year I'm really looking forward to a traditional
turkey dinner with all the trimmings...and a pumpkin pie or two
for dessert. It may be over three hundred years since the first
Thanksgiving...but the spirit is still the same.

11. FREYMAN: Yes, Johnny...the spirit of thankfulness is the same as it was on early New England's stern and rockbound coast. But...the food . . . is very different.

12. JOHN: How do you mean?

13. FREYMAN: Well what we think of now as a "traditional" Thanksgiving dinner... turkey...and everything else...is a tradition that's grown up long after the Pilgrims.

14. JOHN: Well, I wonder what the Pilgrims really did eat at their first Thanksgiving feast then ..(FADE) if they didn't have the kind of Thanksgiving we do...

15. PRUDENCE: (FADE IN) (about 10 years old.) ducks...and geese...and eels, and clams...oh, Mother was there ever such a feast?

16. MOTHER: Certainly not in Plymouth, my child. Come now, Prudence, fix your mind on your needle and your sampler. Waste not your time dreaming about the feast. 'Tis done.

17. PRUDENCE: Yes, Mother. (PAUSE) But 'tisn't really done, Mother...not when I can remember it so clearly. I can remember it in parts...the very beginning of the preparation. Governor Bradford sent four men out to shoot wild fowl.

18. MOTHER: And a good job they did of it, too. They returned with so many, it kept all the women busy for an entire day...just attending to the fowl.

19. PRUDENCE: And I can just see a picture of Mistress Hopkins shaping the dough for the white bread and the corn bread. Which do you like best, Mother?

20. MOTHER: Why...both, Prudence. Both are nourishing. But no more . . . prattling...idle tongues cast a spell on busy fingers.

21. PRUDENCE: Yes, Mother. (PAUSE) Mother, were you surprised when all those braves whooped down on our harvest festival?

22; MOTHER: I knew the mighty chief Massasoit had been bidden to accept our hospitality at the feast.

23. PRUDENCE: Yes...but when those braves appeared so suddenly I was frightened. I knew not whether they were friend or foe.

24. MOTHER: But you saw...they were friendly. There was nothing to fear.

25. PRUDENCE: Oh yes...they seemed to be friends. And when they went out into the forest and brought back some venison...I knew they were friends.

26. MOTHER: Prudence, are you working diligently on your sampler as you talk?

27. PRUDENCE: Yes, Mother...Indeed I seem to get in more stitches when I am talking...especially about the feast.

28. MOTHER: Very well, you may chatter on a little more. What else did you like about the feast?

29. PRUDENCE: Oh, the leeks and the watercress, the pompions and squash...and the wild plums and the berries. And best of all...best of all...

30. MOTHER: Well, child? Out with it...what did please you best of all?

31: PRUDENCE: You will say it is sinful, Mother.

32. MOTHER: Perhaps...

33. PRUDENCE: Best of all I enjoyed having the feast continue for three days.. with no chores...expect helping to make ready the food...and then eating it.

34. MOTHER: It would be sinful, Prudence, if we were not celebrating our harvest and giving thanks for our good fortune in surviving a whole year here in America.

35. PRUDENCE: Then it truly was a wonderful Thanksgiving feast...perhaps we can have another one like it next year.

36. MOTHER: Maybe we shall...(FADE) Maybe we shall

37. SOUND: PAUSE

38. JOHN: Well, the Pilgrims certainly started something with that first Thanksgiving, Mrs. Freyman. And I'm sure glad Thanksgiving isn't just a New England holiday.

39. FREYMAN: Then you can thank Mrs. Sarah T. Hale for that, Johnny.

40. JOHN: Okay...my most sincere thanks to Mrs. Hale. Now...how about telling me who the lady is?

41. FREYMAN: You mean, who she was. About a hundred years ago, Mrs. Hale was the editor of the famous "Godey's Lady's Book" in Philadelphia.

42. JOHN: Well, what did she have to do with Thanksgiving?

43. FREYMAN: Mrs. Hale thought it was a good idea to have Thanksgiving celebrated all over the country every year. So she wrote . editorial after editorial on the subject. And she even sent personal letters to each of the Governors and the President.

44. JOHN: I guess a lot of people agreed with her idea.

45. FREYMAN: Must have been...because in 1863 President Lincoln issued the first Proclamation for a national Thanksgiving Day.

46. JOHN: And the whole country's been celebrating Thanksgiving ever since.

47. FREYMAN: And generally / through the years, our Thanksgiving menu took on its present shape.

48. JOHN: Yes, the first Thanksgiving dinner was a lot different from what we eat today..

49. FREYMAN: But remember, historians don't exactly agree on just what the Pilgrims' menu was.

50. JOHN: But it's a cinch that if the Pilgrim fathers did shoot wild turkey it was a different bird from what we know.

51. FREYMAN: Oh yes. The turkey we order from the butcher is juicier...more tender...and with a lot more white meat.

52. JOHN: The result of years of research and turkey breeding.

53. FREYMAN: Johnny...I've been checking on the supplies for our 1946 Thanksgiving dinner. And there's good news to report.

54. JOHN: Is there a good supply of turkeys?

55; FREYMAN: Yes sir, there should be plenty of turkeys in most markets right across the nation. And chickens and ducks too...if you'd rather have them.

56; JOHN: They'd be good for small families...who can't use a whole big gobbler.

56-A FREYMAN: Now let's talk about stuffing.

57. JOHN: One of my favorit subjects...

58. FREYMAN: Here's an easy way to figure out how to get the right amount of stuffing for the size of the bird.

59. JOHN: Don't tell me a Thanksgiving turkey requires higher mathematics.

60. FREYMAN: No...but you don't want to pack too much stuffing into the turkey ...because it will expand some during cooking.

61. JOHN: Okay...then how about the easy way you mentioned for figuring out the right amount of stuffing?

62. FREYMAN: Well...here's what the home economists at the U. S. Department of Agriculture advise. For every pound of turkey...count on one cup of crumbs.

63. JOHN: A cup of crumbs for every pound.

64. FREYMAN: Then if the turkey weighs ten pounds or less...subtract one cup from the total. If the turkey weighs over ten pounds...subtract two cups from the total.

65. JOHN: Sounds easy...but let's see if I've gotten it straight. For every pound of the bird, figure on a cup of crumbs. If the bird weighs under ten pounds subtract one cup from the total...if it tips the scale at over ten pounds, subtract two cups from the total.

66. FREYMAN: That's it. So you'd need four cups of crumbs to stuff a chicken that weighs five pounds dressed weight.

67. JOHN: And twelve cups of crumbs to stuff a big gobbler weighing fourteen pounds.

68. FREYMAN: Dressed weight, that means that the bird has been picked but not drawn...and the head and feet haven't been cut off.

69. JOHN: But Mrs. Freyman...what if you don't have a slide rule in the kicthen at that moment...and something does go wrong...and lo and behold you have more stuffing than the turkey can hold?

70. FREYMAN: Easy. Just add an egg and a little broth to the extra stuffing. Put it in a greased pan...and brown it in the oven..

71. JOHN: Good enough. Now...any more tips on stuffing the turkey?

72. FREYMAN: Well...if you want to speed up the cooking of the big bird somewhat...heat the stuffing and put it in hot...if the turkey's going into the oven right away.

73. JOHN: Say...that brings up the question of whether or not it's okay to stuff the turkey the day before you cook it.

74. FREYMAN: It's perfectly all right, Johnny...and lots of people find it more convenient. Then you put the stuffing in cold. And remember to keep the bird chilled until cooking time.

75. JOHN: Another turkey controversy that comes up in my house every Thanksgiving is whether to cover the turkey or not. How about it?

76. FREYMAN: Definitely not!...if it's a young bird.

77. JOHN: Okay...no cover.

78. FREYMAN: And when I say no cover I mean no lid...

79. JOHN: No lid.

80. FREYMAN: No cloth...soaked in fat or otherwise.

81. JOHN: No cloth.

82. FREYMAN: And no blanket of dough over the bird.

83. JOHN: No dough. Don't get personal...I mean, why so many no's on these things?

86. FREYMAN: Because Johnny, all they do is steam the turkey. And a young bird has tender meat to begin with...so it doesn't need steaming.

85. JOHN: Sounds logical.

86. FREYMAN: And further more...staeming breaks the turkey's skin which means you're going to lose some of the juice and the bird's going to lose flavor and shrink more than it should. And it won't be so pretty when it's time to carve it up.

87. JOHN: Well we can't have that. The turkey has to be just splendid-looking or it doesn't seem to taste as good.

88. FREYMAN: You mean...in your opinion. Anyway, to have it taste good and look good, there are just two easy things to remember.

89. JOHN: Okay...number one.

90. FREYMAN: Cook the turkey in a moderate oven so the meat will be juicy, tender and evenly done to the bone.

91. JOHN: Then you'd have to cook it longer.

92. FREYMAN: Yes you would. But it's worth it...because you have actually more meat to serve...and lots more juice and flavor.

93. JOHN: How about turning the turkey? Is that a good idea?

94. FREYMAN: Mm hm. The home economists say turn small and medium-sized turkeys every forty-five minutes or so.

95. JOHN: What do you mean by small and medium-sized turkeys, Mrs. Freyman?

96. FREYMAN: Under twelve pounds, Johnny. And if they're over twelve pounds, turn them every hour.

97. JOHN: Well, not that we've got the turkey settled..."how about the rest of the items for my Thanksgiving Day dinner?" asked Johnny, the glutton.

98. FREYMAN: Well...I checked with the U. S. Department of Agriculture on those too ...and it looks like almost everything you can think of in connection with your feast will be available.

99. John: Plenty of cranberries?

100. FREYMAN: Plenty...but not much sugar. Although there are some recipes that let you use some of the sugar substitutes.

101. JOHN: Potatoes?

102. FREYMAN: Heaps and heaps of the white ones...and a good many sweet potatoes around now too.

103. JOHN: How about other vegetables?

104. FREYMAN: Well there's plenty of onions...and celery...for your stuffing and salad. Lots of iceberg lettuce. And cauliflower is especially plentiful now. And how about half a grapefruit for the first course?

105. JOHN: You can stop there...I'm full, just thinking about all those things.

106. FREYMAN: Oh Johnny...you must have a bowl of fruit on your Thanksgiving table...with apples and pears. And how about cracking some nuts...almonds, and filberts...to eat with raisins.

107. JOHN: That does it! I'm ready for my post-Thanksgiving dinner nap.
(YAWNS) ho...hum.

108. FREYMAN: Johnny!

109. JOHN: (SLEEPILY) Hmmmm?

110. FREYMAN: We forgot the pumpkin pie.

111. JOHN: No thanks...I think I've had enough...What! No pumpkin pie! I don't care whether the Pilgrims ate it at their first Thanksgiving or not. But it's got to be on my menu.

112. FREYMAN: Well...if pumpkin pie wasn't served at the first Thanksgiving feast...it didn't take the colonists long to find a use for these "pompions" as they called the pumpkins...and not only in pie.

113. JOHN: Well what else do you use pumpkin for besides pie...outside of Jack-o'-lanterns, that is?

114. FREYMAN: The early New Englanders dried the pumpkin and saved them to use during the winter. I've seen lots of recipes in early American cookbooks for preserved pumpkin...and custards. Incidentally, Johnny, you'd never think of the first New England pumpkin pie as being pie.

115. John: Why not?

116. FREYMAN: Because they sliced off the top of the pumpkin...and scooped out the seeds. Then they filled the pumpkin with milk and spices...and probably sweetened it with maple sugar or molasses.

117. JOHN: Sounds good to me...that old direct approach.

118. FREYMAN: Then the pumpkins were baked in the hot ashes in the old brick ovens.

119. JOHN: How'd they serve them?

120. FREYMAN: Why you just eat it from the shell with a spoon.

121. JOHN: And you say there weren't any pumpkin pies at the first Thanksgiving feast?

122. FREYMAN: Well we aren't sure exactly. But we do know that it wasn't very long before pumpkin pie was a "must" on the Thanksgiving Day menu. There's a story about a town in early Connecticut... just before Thanksgiving...(FADE) when every one was very concerned about pumpkin pie...

123. EMILY: Dear Mistress Faith...I come to you because you are the Governor's lady...and a friend.

124. FAITH: Oh...but speak as a friend, do, Mistress Emily.

125. EMILY: Well...as you know, the Governor has already proclaimed Thanksgiving Day.

126. FAITH: Yes...of course...it will be tomorrow.

127. Emily: Precisely. But the whole township is perturbed.

128. FAITH: Yes...I have heard rumor of that.

129. EMILY: Can you blame them? If Thanksgiving is tomorrow--we cannot have pumpkin pie...since the ship with a cargo of molasses has not yet arrived. And how can we offer thanks without pumpkin pie?

130. FAITH: (Almost tearful) Indeed, it would not seem like Thanksgiving at all without pumpkin pie.

131. EMILY: But no one in town will have any...our molasses shipment is so long overdue. And without molasses...

132. FAITH: Yes...a great pity.

133. EMILY: Mistress Faith...I thought...

134. FAITH: Yes...?

135. EMILY: Perhaps...perhaps you would feel strongly enough about the situation...

136. FAITH: I...? dear Mistress Emily...what can I do? Although I hasten to add...I feel just as strongly as you do about pumpkin pie and Thanksgiving.

137. EMILY: Well...if Thanksgiving Day could be postponed...until the molasses arrives...

138. FAITH: But it is already proclaimed!

139. EMILY: Yet another proclamation would postpone it.

140. FAITH: Yes...it would.

141. EMILY: Some of the other families feel that if you suggest it to the Governor.

142. FAITH: It would be highly irregular...still...

143. EMILY: Still?

144. FAITH: The Governor does like his pumpkin pie...Will you excuse me a few moments, Mistress Emily?

145. EMILY: Indeed yes, Mistress Faith.

146. FAITH: I would just see if the Governor can spare me his ear for a tiny bit... (PROJECTING) I shall return very shortly.

147. EMILY: (CALLING TO HER) I shall be glad to wait. (HUMS UNDER HER BREATH OFF AND ON... UNTIL FAITH RETURNS)

148. FAITH: Ah, Mistress Emily.

149. EMILY: Back so quickly Mistress Faith?

150. FAITH: I am so happy to report that Thanksgiving Day will be postponed ...until the molasses for our pumpkin pies arrive.

151. EMILY: Mistress Faith!

152. FAITH: The Governor's clerk is just now penning the proclamation.

153. EMILY: All credit to you... Mistress Faith. Now we can truly offer thanks on Thanksgiving day... and properly with pumpkin pie!

154. SOUND: PAUSE

155. FREYMAN: See, Johnny, even our early Colonial dames proved that you should never underestimate the power of a woman.

156. JOHN: Or of a pumpkin pie.

157. FREYMAN: Well anyhow... I've got some tips here for making pumpkin pie that should come in handy this week.

158. JOHN: My favorite subject.

159. FREYMAN: I thought that was stuffing?

160. JOHN: Nope... changed my mind... it's pumpkin pie. I hope you're going to say something about which make the best pies... the (BARITONE) great big pumpkins... or (TENOR) the cute little ones.

161. FREYMAN: The best advice to follow is neither.

162. JOHN: Neither! Then how am I going to have pumpkin pie?

163. FREYMAN: What I mean is stick to a medium size pumpkin and you'll do all right.

164. JOHN: Oh.

165. FREYMAN: The very large pumpkin may be coarse and not so sweet. And you don't want a very small one either, because it's liable to be immature and not have much flavor.

166. JOHN: Okay...we'll stick to Mr. Inbetween.

167. FREYMAN: Now one more thing about pumpkin pie. Don't give it the measles.

168. JOHN: The measles!

169. FREYMAN: You know, those little black specks that are caused by mixing your spices right in with the pumpkin.

170. JOHN: (RELIEVED) Oh...is that all!

171. FREYMAN: It really isn't important...but you get a much nicer looking pie if you mix the spices with the dry ingredients before you add them to the pumpkin.

172. JOHN: Well now...that we've taken care of our Thanksgiving dinner...past and present...how about doing some crystal ball gazing?

173. FREYMAN: Allright. What's on CONSUMER TIME next Saturday, Johnny?

174. JOHN: Well next week it's 4-H Club Congress time.

175. FREYMAN: So it is...and time for us to present "Consumers in the Making"...the story of how 4-H club boys and girls are learning to be wise consumers.

176. JOHN: Yes...through projects on clothes, canning, home furnishings. ...to mention just a few, 4-h'ers are receiving consumer training that will stand them in good stead as adults.

177. FREYMAN: Next week, part of our program will be broadcast from Chicago...where boys and girls from every State in the country will be gathering for the 4-H Club Congress.

178. JOHN: And as our special guests, we'll have some of these 4-H club people who have won prizes in their home States for their projects.

179. FREYMAN: Johnny, I have a sneaking suspicion we adults can get a lot of good ideas from these youngsters.

180. JOHN: And I have a sneaking suspicion that you're right, Mrs. Freyman. So friends be sure to be with us next Saturday for a visit to the 4-H Club Congress in Chicago.

181. SOUND: CASH REGISTER

182. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME

183. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER

184. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME written by Eleanor Miller and directed by Frederick Schweikher, is presented by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, through the facilities of the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations. It comes to you from Washington, D. C.
This is the NBC, the National Broadcasting Company

